

[John Curran, Associated Press](#)

For some veterans returning home, a new battle awaits: finding work.

But a measure being introduced by U.S. Rep. Peter Welch would give them a leg up on finding jobs, providing a \$2,400 tax credit to employers who hire veterans who've been jobless for at least four weeks.

The bill, which will be introduced today, would apply to companies that hire veterans who've served on active duty or National Guard for more than 180 days in the past five years. It would restore a similar tax credit that was included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act but expired at the end of 2010.

In Vermont, it has particular appeal. Members of the Vermont National Guard are still getting used to the home front after a yearlong deployment that saw about 1,500 ship out to Afghanistan. With the state jobless rate at 5.8 percent as of December, finding work hasn't been easy. According to Guard commander Maj. Gen. Michael Dubie, up to 30 percent of the soldiers involved in that deployment reported — in a survey taken as they prepared to return — not having jobs to go back to once they returned home.

Among them: Richard Sugai, 26, of Berlin, who got back in December after serving as an intelligence analyst in the Afghanistan deployment and is now looking for work in law enforcement.

"I'd like to find a job in law enforcement, but it's slim pickings," he said Monday.

Welch announced the initiative in an appearance Monday at a Granite Industries of Vermont granite shed in Barre.

"Our soldiers are excellent employees," said Welch, D-Vt. "They're hard workers. They have tremendous skills. They have a strong work ethic. But it's a tough economic time that they're coming home to."

The intent of the tax credit is to give employers the boost they need to decide to hire, and to look favorably on veterans, according to Welch.

The state is working on similar legislation.

Under a jobs plan announced last week by Gov. Peter Shumlin, employers who hire veterans would be able to apply for a tax rebate of up to \$2,000. But that measure is aimed at a narrower pool of potential hires — those who have returned from deployment in the last couple of years, according to Lawrence Miller, secretary of the state Agency of Commerce and Community Development.

Neither the Welch tax credit nor the state tax rebate has been approved yet.

"I'd like to ask all employers not to wait for our legislation, though," Miller said.

For video of the event, see below: